

It is said that people will forget what was said to them and they will forget how they were treated. They will also forget how hard or easy the times they went through were. But there is one thing they will never forget-----and that is how someone made them feel!!!!

Today I am a professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the Milwaukee school of engineering, and my daughter, Tonia, will be attending college this fall. This success, respect and happiness that came our way through hard and consistent work would not have been possible if the UW-Milwaukee children center's daycare and after school programs were not part of our lives.

During my doctorate at UW-Milwaukee, when money was scarce, time was a commodity, life was almost unaffordable, and pressures of being a single parent were crushing-----UW-Milwaukee children center held my daughter and me in an incredible cradle of promise to a bright future.

The small fact that the UWM day care escort service picked Tonia up from the neighborhood school gave me the crucial time and peace of mind that I desperately needed to work in a molecular biology lab-----The fact that my child was provided with a safe place to play, yummy snacks to eat, healthy activities to engage in, good peers to influence her, and most of all very high quality of attention and unconditional affection by the UWM day care staff helped me focus on my PhD.

It may sound trivial to some when I brag that Tonia learned to weave, knit, swim, and respect things like reading and writing during her time at the UWM day care but to me, it is anything but trivial.

It is not important whether she remembers how to weave today or not, but the texture and feel of those skills and activities are a direct part of Tonia's personality and always will be. The way that the UWM children's center's after school assistance and staff made me feel for 6 years is the most important thread in the fabric of my life today.

I ask you as a mother-----what do you call a place that promises you the safety and education of your child while you are hard at work?

What do you call a place that gives you respect regardless of your salary?

What do you call a place where, when you arrive to pick up your child after an exhausting day, the smell of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches rushes to your nose and makes you smile? Your daughter offers you candy or an origami paper bird that she learned to make that day-----Then she put her arms around you and whispers, "Can we stay a little longer?" I don't know what you call a place like that, but...

I call it "paradise"

I thank you all for giving us a chance to be part of this Governor's summit today.